My dear Mother

I can hardly finish my letter to my uncle, when I receive the 7th. head assured, in which you appear to be apprehensive that some of your late letters and parcels have fallen into the hands of the Carlists. This makes me fearful in my turn that some of my epistles have not reached, as I think it is some time since I wrote to you to say that the parcel containing the Kaffir assegai which I left at Massaya, and that I was so careless, stupid and unfortunate as to put it (the guide) in my coat pocket with a hole in it just big enough to let it through and lose it on the march from Massaya to Monaiga. I never was more vexed and mortified in my life — to think that the very thing I had done to cherish and treasure up your gift was the cause of its loss — for I will recollect that on packing up for the march at Massaya my servant asked me whether he should put it into my knapsack, and I said no, that for safety I kept it always about me. I was so engaged with the faithless pocket, that having no thread at the time to sew up the hole, I tore it off altogether, that it might not be the cause of any future loss. ~~Yes~~ As I said before, I have lost almost everything of value that I brought out with me to Spain, and if ever I go out on a similar expedition I will have nothing but what will cost little or a small value — viz. 3 shirts, 3 pair of socks, 2 pair of drawers, a comb and tooth-brush — which is my whole wardrobe. I forgot, the remainder being in store at Santander. The robberies that were committed on officers' baggage at Santander were perfectly shameful — I believe there is a Court of Inquiry now sitting to find out the authors of it. My rifle, I have not the slightest doubt, was stolen by the same person who took my baggage — in point of fact, waiter or steward — for though I was set down to share a room for the purpose of guarding the regimental baggage, I had little to do with it, as I was in a state of sickness and had plenty of weeks and trouble on my hands with the living luggage, and the rt. [illegible] of you — which I think [illegible] of seventeen portmanteaus, six enormous cases full of — nobody knows what, carpet-bags and haversacks innumerable, with trunks and teapots of every size and description belonging to my family — for all of which I was held responsible. You can't imagine a more troublesome or unpleasant job. I hardly wonder at the thing that has been going on in the regiment when I come to look at the character of a great number of its officers. Had I been at home on the point of leave a few months ago or at present, I left behind that should never have had my watch in his hands for a moment, or the Regiment should have left that to would trust with any sum of money, great or small, to take care for me to Cadiz — that is to say, they are all good fellows, "country and pattern all," their conduct, but so fuddled upon by their Captains and quite devoid of any notions of decency or morality that they will not think at any doubt on disgraceful task to gain their ends.

I wonder more much that Col. Kirby, who I think is a man of honour and honesty, shd. have had certain promotions he did in the Light. For instance he raised from the ranks, and made quarter-master, one of the darkest blackguards I ever came in contact with in my life — a man who was thrown out of an infamous public-house at Sheerness — and who is perfected of to little common honesty, that one day when I went to him to receive my field-allowance (the Pay-master being sick of the fever at the time) he actually stole my gloves, which I seemed so perfectly to have taken out of my cap and left on his table while I was counting over the money. I called again next day for them — but by no such the had been left there — and I was so amazed at the fellow's impudence that I said to him significantly "I know it was a hopeless thing even to expect them back from you." If you shd. see Col. Kirby before he returns, you might relate this little anecdote, and ask him if he is not ashamed to have promoted such a vagabond. Also for Capt. Wentworth Stuart he is a drunken sot and a swindler into the bargain — I always knew him to be the first, but not the last the latter, or I shd. not have given him my wrath. I am not the only sufferer by him — he left Spain owing one of our Captains 5 or 10 £. — the accounts of his Company unsettled — and also ran off with a carpet-bag full of shirts belonging to another officer in the Regt. Here is a specimen of your "British officer" — and of the Legion. — All your parcels have arrived safely, including the one containing the Byron and Goethe, which for many reasons, moral and physical, I had most fears about. The latter when acceptable in the highest degree, as comfiture of any sort is hard to get in Spain. The only kind I have met with is a sweetmeat made of sugar and honey boiled together, very sweet and cloying, which they call turron. As for any of the varieties of sugar-on-peppermint, I dare say they never heard of them. The ginger-candy is deliciously excellent, and I am so continually putting a little bit, and a little bit into my mouth that I fear it will be all gone before we march. Only 1 box of confits is by this time half devoured — so I have been to judge of their goodness. Many thanks to every body who contributed to the glorious packet of letters that came in the two parcels. I really feel ashamed to think of my illness in not answering others — especially the letters of Sister and Pontom, both of whom have written very frequently to my delight and edification. It will not be long, however, before I write to them, and as Pontom says "empty my sack of news" into their ears. I am very thankful also for the razors, which are the most valuable thing a man can have on a campaign. All my original ones had either been worn away or lost, and the day before yours had arrived I had bought three pair in Britoria — which however are not too many with the two from England in addition. I can just fancy how my father would stick out for two pair instead of three — he is very particular in some little things, especially in numbers. Do you recollect how fussier he was in the number of pen and nibs of my two first matriculations — and how much vexed at the death's head and cross-bones on my sword, which though an absurd device and most likely to arouse of poor Ben. "Twenty" mounted at Sueveria, no one else in London besides himself would have observed. Even yet the circumstance appears to dwell in his memory, for in one of his last letters he hopes "to continue to Ben my sword or break it, and yet today an English regulation or a Spanish" for aught I suppose that he very nearly caused me to lose my passage in the steamer at the risk of 20 or 30 £ by being so round by Regent Street to the sword-makers in order to have the obnoxious badge scratched out. Possibly I shall find Blade blades mean six feet long, which I could hardly lift. — I cannot at all surmise who the correspondent of the Morning Post can be, only it is an Enemy of my late Regt. who was dismissed the service the other day for wanting to fight a duel, and went over to the Carlists which we have at Pedino. His name

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is Hutchinson, and he is a young man of most extraordinary character and ability — totally without principle as far as religion, politics, or morality go, but one of the cleverest and best educated men in the Legion. I knew him well while he was with us, as he was the only man in the Regt. that made any profession of learning or literature — German and French he knew well, and was a perfect "fair hand" at Latin and Greek. He seemed travelled without a farthing in his pocket, and cd. quote Virgil and Horace by the bushel. He had seemingly been in Portugal as a fugitive in the Lucens, and was afterwards a regular in the infantry, and in consequence, he knew of his instructor in being a great number of his old comrades to be in the Lot. Regt. Just this commission in this service. He professed to be a staunch Tory in politics, and had put into some pamphlet in Portugal by way insulting against the Whigs in a work entitled the "Siege of Oporto," and as he often told me that he was connected with sundry Tory papers in London — the Albion I think was one he mentioned — it is not improbable that he may be my pitiful "Spy" in the Post. He was very anxious dismissed, and I do not at all blame him for the step he took, as it was not desertion he being no longer an officer in the Legion. He was with most Satanic and then left that with a stolen final of no very respectable character with whom he fell in love cd in spite of all I cd. say or do, nothing cd. cool him but he must marry her. Col. Reid says that if his senior officer had been put him under arrest rather than let him bring such a disgrace upon the Regt. However, he married her, and some time after at Ballincorra was insulted by some blackguard who knew his wife before. Hutchinson challenged him, which the other refused, upon this he felt himself hooted all over the town in French, Spanish, and English as a villain, coward and blackleg — "picaro, ladron, y mentecato" — and all manner of epithets of a like nature. The Major commanding at Ballincorra sent an account of all this to head-quarters, and both parties were in consequence immediately dismissed. Hutchinson came over afterwards to see us at Passino with his wife, and as he had no bed I gave him mine for the night I was on guard. The next morning to my surprise I found after he had left, having behind a small haversack containing some needles and thread and two pocket books — his documents, a French novel, and "Dodd's Early Piety" belonging to his wife — his handwriting in contrast with his own and wife's signatures — and several letters, one writing in a very pretty body. He had from his sister containing a lock of her hair. We have since heard that he has been very well received by the Carlists, who have tried the same to make him Sergt. Colonel of all their foreigners and deserters from the Legion, and as Hutchinson is a man of talent and humanity, I have no doubt that his treatment of prisoners and deserters will cause a great number of the Carlists among the English — for I think Gen. Evans had better not have been so hasty in dismissing him.

I am in a state of great suspense and indecision about what I had best do after this service is over. I have been so strongly advised by everybody I have consulted here on the subject, to stay the last service in preference to any other, that I begin to waver in my plan of going home and entering the Spanish army. Perhaps after all my plan would only be a good one as a last resource, and as I may fairly hope to get home as a commissioner in the line, it wd. be better for me to accept it as soon as circumstances will permit. If my Mexican plan shd. be rejected at home, as it appears to be by everybody I know here, and there shd. be no prospect of the Legion entering any permanent service rather than incur the risk of losing my commission in the 81st. by any delay, I think that I had better join it at once. This I shd. be very unwilling to do if I thought we were going to have any "work" — but it seems to be the general opinion that in consequence of the alliance of England and France, I alluded to it in my letter to Uncle Charles, you shall be kept for nothing but dull garrison duty, and Gen. Rice says, on Q. M. General, that there is no chance of our being all disbanded in October next. I understand that it is a very difficult matter to get home for any length of time after the first 2 months allowed you to join — and that any sort of understanding with the army agent or anybody else would not be sufficient for sufficient reason

the Horse Guards. Do tell my father of this, that he may not make a mistake, and at the same time [illegible] him as to what is best to be done, [illegible] he knows the result in your next. I [illegible] calculated the chances of [illegible] in the two services as far as depends upon myself, and [illegible] the [illegible] to the Spanish, [illegible] as [illegible] is above in Spain [illegible] how I [illegible] my [illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible] parts, and calculate the chances as far as [illegible] upon myself — whether this [illegible] or [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to get [illegible] in a moderate degree in the English service — whether [illegible] in Spain [illegible] — whether for instance, while I am Subaltern or Captain in the British, I [illegible] have a Colonel or Major [illegible] Donnell in the Spanish. Now are all things to be weighed and considered before taking any [illegible], and [illegible] no particular wish of my own on the subject, I leave it in the [illegible] [illegible] father. By this time you must have heard of my promotion to a Captaincy in the 9th Reg[t]. All this would be very flattering and pleasing if I were not building on a sandy [illegible]. This, however, [illegible] [illegible], and the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] my promotion in the British [illegible] not to be without its value, that I have never been raised a single step without being previously recommended by my commanding officer. Col. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] one very [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] on my letter, and Col. Beaton who recommended me to the

Fironda 27th. March 1836. No. 13

Mrs. Col. [illegible]
18, Hanover Terrace
Regent's Park
London
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[illegible] for my [illegible], [illegible] a perfect [illegible] [illegible] whom I [illegible] a [illegible] words while he was in the Regt. but [illegible] pleased, as he told me, with my steadiness and activity during the [illegible] charge of the Light Company. — The officers of the [illegible] to be all [illegible] good fellows, and rather [illegible] [illegible]. They had a [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] St. Patrick's day (it being an Irish Reg[t].) and made [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] — [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], as it is the most unsatisfactory of all ways of [illegible] money. However I bought them [illegible] of wine [illegible] cost me 5 dollars at a time when my [illegible] was very low, and [illegible] hoped it might poison them — but [illegible] made them drunk. — I have bought myself a very pretty black horse for 15 £. in place of my [illegible] that [illegible] the battle at [illegible]. I had a [illegible] [illegible] days [illegible], and at length [illegible] [illegible] having [illegible] the bargain, and [illegible] [illegible], what was my horror the first time I [illegible] him to find he was dog-lame of the off hind leg. I [illegible] him to the [illegible] of the [illegible] and [illegible] other [illegible] — some said it was in the [illegible] the hoof — others that the [illegible] hurt him — others that it was a spavin in the fetlock — and [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], and [illegible] him by [illegible] him with balls, and [illegible] they [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], on the [illegible] of the [illegible]